

□ 1402

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia changed his vote from “yea” to “nay.”

Mr. ROYCE changed his vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 182, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 182.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 415, nays 0, not voting 16, as follows:

[Roll No. 149]

YEAS—415

Abercrombie	Burton (IN)	Diaz-Balart, M.
Ackerman	Butterfield	Dicks
Aderholt	Buyer	Dingell
Adler (NJ)	Calvert	Doggett
Akin	Camp	Donnelly (IN)
Alexander	Campbell	Doyle
Altmire	Cantor	Dreier
Andrews	Cao	Driehaus
Arcuri	Capito	Duncan
Austria	Capps	Edwards (MD)
Baca	Capuano	Edwards (TX)
Bachmann	Cardoza	Ehlers
Bachus	Carnahan	Ellison
Baird	Carney	Ellsworth
Baldwin	Carson (IN)	Emerson
Barrett (SC)	Carter	Eshoo
Barrow	Cassidy	Etheridge
Bartlett	Castle	Fallin
Barton (TX)	Castor (FL)	Farr
Bean	Chaffetz	Fattah
Becerra	Chandler	Filner
Berkley	Childers	Flake
Berman	Clarke	Fleming
Berry	Clay	Forbes
Biggert	Cleaver	Fortenberry
Billbray	Clyburn	Foster
Billirakis	Coble	Fox
Bishop (GA)	Coffman (CO)	Frank (MA)
Bishop (NY)	Cohen	Franks (AZ)
Bishop (UT)	Cole	Frelinghuysen
Blackburn	Conaway	Fudge
Blumenauer	Connolly (VA)	Gallegly
Blunt	Conyers	Garrett (NJ)
Boccieri	Cooper	Gerlach
Boehner	Costa	Giffords
Bonner	Courtney	Gingrey (GA)
Bono Mack	Crenshaw	Gohmert
Boozman	Crowley	Gonzalez
Boren	Cuellar	Goodlatte
Boswell	Culberson	Gordon (TN)
Boucher	Cummings	Granger
Boustany	Dahlkemper	Graves
Boyd	Davis (AL)	Grayson
Brady (PA)	Davis (CA)	Green, Al
Brady (TX)	Davis (IL)	Green, Gene
Braley (IA)	Davis (KY)	Griffith
Bright	Davis (TN)	Grijalva
Broun (GA)	Deal (GA)	Guthrie
Brown (SC)	DeFazio	Gutierrez
Brown, Corrine	DeGette	Hall (NY)
Brown-Waite,	DeLaunt	Hall (TX)
Ginny	DeLauro	Halvorson
Buchanan	Dent	Hare
Burgess	Diaz-Balart, L.	Harman

Harper	Matheson	Royce
Hastings (FL)	Matsui	Ruppersberger
Hastings (WA)	McCarthy (CA)	Rush
Heinrich	McCarthy (NY)	Ryan (OH)
Heller	McCauley	Ryan (WI)
Hensarling	McClintock	Salazar
Herger	McCollum	Sanchez, Linda
Higgins	McDermott	T.
Himes	McGovern	Sanchez, Loretta
Hinchey	McHenry	Sarbanes
Hinojosa	McHugh	Scalise
Hirono	McIntyre	Schakowsky
Hodes	McKeon	Schauer
Hoekstra	McMahon	Schiff
Holden	McMorris	Schmidt
Holt	Rodgers	Schock
Honda	McNerney	Schrader
Hoyer	Meek (FL)	Schwartz
Hunter	Meeks (NY)	Scott (GA)
Inglis	Melancon	Scott (VA)
Inslee	Mica	Sensenbrenner
Israel	Michaud	Serrano
Issa	Miller (FL)	Sestak
Jackson (IL)	Miller (MI)	Shadegg
Jackson-Lee	Miller (NC)	Shea-Porter
(TX)	Miller, George	Sherman
Jenkins	Minnick	Shimkus
Johnson (GA)	Mitchell	Shuler
Johnson (IL)	Mollohan	Shuster
Johnson, E. B.	Moore (KS)	Simpson
Johnson, Sam	Moore (WI)	Sires
Jones	Moran (KS)	Skelton
Jordan (OH)	Moran (VA)	Slaughter
Kagen	Murphy (CT)	Smith (NE)
Kanjorski	Murphy, Patrick	Smith (TX)
Kaptur	Murphy, Tim	Smith (WA)
Kennedy	Murtha	Snyder
Kildee	Myrick	Souder
Kilpatrick (MI)	Nadler (NY)	Space
Kilroy	Napolitano	Speier
Kind	Neal (MA)	Spratt
King (IA)	Neugebauer	Stark
King (NY)	Nunes	Stearns
Kingston	Nye	Stupak
Kirk	Oberstar	Sullivan
Kirkpatrick (AZ)	Obey	Sutton
Kissell	Olson	Tanner
Klein (FL)	Olver	Tauscher
Kline (MN)	Ortiz	Teague
Kosmas	Pallone	Terry
Kratovil	Pastor (AZ)	Thompson (MS)
Kucinich	Paul	Thompson (PA)
Lamborn	Paulsen	Thornberry
Lance	Payne	Tiahrt
Langevin	Pence	Tiberi
Larsen (WA)	Perlmutter	Tierney
Larson (CT)	Perriello	Titus
Latham	Peters	Tonko
LaTourette	Peterson	Towns
Latta	Petri	Tsongas
Lee (CA)	Pingree (ME)	Upton
Lee (NY)	Pitts	Van Hollen
Levin	Platts	Velázquez
Lewis (CA)	Poe (TX)	Visclosky
Lewis (GA)	Polis (CO)	Walden
Linder	Posey	Walz
Lipinski	Price (GA)	Wamp
LoBiondo	Price (NC)	Wasserman
Loeb sack	Putnam	Schultz
Lofgren, Zoe	Rahall	Waters
Lowey	Rangel	Watson
Lucas	Rehberg	Watt
Luetkemeyer	Reichert	Waxman
Lujan	Reyes	Weiner
Lummis	Richardson	Welch
Lungren, Daniel	Rodriguez	Wexler
E.	Roe (TN)	Whitfield
Lynch	Rogers (AL)	Wilson (OH)
Mack	Rogers (KY)	Wilson (SC)
Maffei	Rogers (MI)	Wittman
Maloney	Rohrabacher	Wolf
Manzullo	Rooney	Woolsey
Marchant	Ros-Lehtinen	Yarmuth
Markey (CO)	Roskam	Young (AK)
Markey (MA)	Ross	Young (FL)
Marshall	Rothman (NJ)	
Massa	Roybal-Allard	

NOT VOTING—16

Costello	Pascarell	Thompson (CA)
Engel	Pomeroy	Turner
Herseth Sandlin	Radanovich	Westmoreland
Hill	Sessions	Wu
McCotter	Smith (NJ)	
Miller, Gary	Taylor	

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining in this vote.

□ 1409

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

Mrs. HALVORSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 234) expressing support for designation of a “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day”.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 234

Whereas the Vietnam War was fought in Vietnam from 1961 to 1975, and involved North Vietnam and the Viet Cong in conflict with United States Armed Forces and South Vietnam;

Whereas the United States became involved in Vietnam because policy-makers in the United States believed that if South Vietnam fell to a Communist government then Communism would spread throughout the rest of Southeast Asia;

Whereas members of the United States Armed Forces began serving in an advisory role to the South Vietnamese in 1961;

Whereas as a result of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents on August 2 and 4, 1964, Congress overwhelmingly passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (Public Law 88-408), on August 7, 1964, which effectively handed over war-making powers to President Johnson until such time as “peace and security” had returned to Vietnam;

Whereas, in 1965, United States Armed Forces ground combat units arrived in Vietnam;

Whereas, by the end of 1965, there were 80,000 United States troops in Vietnam, and by 1969 a peak of approximately 543,000 troops was reached;

Whereas, on January 27, 1973, the Treaty of Paris was signed, which required the release of all United States prisoners-of-war held in North Vietnam and the withdrawal of all United States Armed Forces from South Vietnam;

Whereas, on March 30, 1973, the United States Armed Forces completed the withdrawal of combat troops from Vietnam;

Whereas more than 58,000 members of the United States Armed Forces lost their lives in Vietnam and more than 300,000 members of the Armed Forces were wounded;

Whereas, in 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in the District of Columbia to commemorate those members of the United States Armed Forces who died or were declared missing-in-action in Vietnam;

Whereas the Vietnam War was an extremely divisive issue among the people of the United States;

Whereas members of the United States Armed Forces who served bravely and faithfully for the United States during the Vietnam War were caught upon their return home in the crossfire of public debate about the involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War;

Whereas the establishment of a "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" would be an appropriate way to honor those members of the United States Armed Forces who served in Vietnam during the Vietnam War; and

Whereas March 30, 2009, would be an appropriate day to establish as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors and recognizes the contributions of veterans of the Armed Forces who served in Vietnam; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" with appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of the contributions of veterans who served in Vietnam and the importance of helping Vietnam era veterans re-adjust to civilian life.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CUMMINGS). Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. HALVORSON) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois.

Mrs. HALVORSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 234. This resolution before us today establishes March 30, 2009, as a day to honor and recognize the contributions of veterans of the Vietnam War.

As a member of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, I have had the opportunity to hear the accounts of many Vietnam veterans. I hear the pride that came with the duty of defending their country, and I hear the anguish that they felt coming home to a country that confused the war and the warrior.

I encourage all Americans to reach out to veterans, especially our Vietnam veterans. Thank them and their families for their amazing sacrifice, understand more about their great contributions to our country, and gain the wisdom of their personal stories of our Nation's history.

There are more than 24 million veterans living in this country today, including 8.2 million veterans that served during the Vietnam War. Of these veterans, 2.6 million served in country.

More than 58,000 members in our military lost their lives in Vietnam. Tragically, American casualties continued to climb after the war, as a result of suicides, substance abuse, and homelessness among these veterans and their families.

More than 300,000 members of the Armed Forces were reported wounded as a result of the Vietnam War. Today, this number also continues to grow, as more and more of our Vietnam veterans are feeling the effects of Agent Orange.

Approximately 20 million gallons of herbicides were used in Vietnam between 1962 and 1971 to remove unwanted vegetation that provided cover for enemy forces during the war. Shortly following their military services in Vietnam, some veterans reported a va-

riety of health problems and concerns due to exposure to Agent Orange. Modern science clearly establishes that the symptoms of many degenerative diseases can take decades to onset.

Too many Vietnam veterans are suffering from conditions that resulted from their service to our country, yet are not considered service-connected by our government. Time is running out for many of our Vietnam veterans. Many have already lost the battle. And those who remain, along with their families, are fighting for their lives every day.

□ 1415

The Vietnam War was a very divisive time, and too many Americans, myself included, confused the war and the warrior. We did not provide the support, the care, the compassion, and the love that our dedicated servicemembers earned and deserved.

Many of our finest leaders, both military and political, have been quoted as saying that they did not believe that the men who served in uniform in Vietnam were given the credit they deserve.

In that spirit, the House of Representatives takes this step to recognize the contributions of brave veterans who served in Vietnam and the continued importance of helping Vietnam-era veterans readjust to civilian life.

So I ask my colleagues to join me in showing our gratitude to those brave men and women who served during the Vietnam War. Mr. Speaker, I urge strong support for House Resolution 234.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his quick consideration of the bill, House Resolution 234, a resolution expressing support for the designation of a "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day." I commend my colleague, Congresswoman LINDA SÁNCHEZ of California, for introducing this resolution.

The desire to welcome home our Nation's Vietnam veterans is strong across the country. It has now been 36 years since the American troops left Vietnam. It was March 30, 1973, when the United States Army completed the withdrawal of combat troops from Vietnam.

Last Congress, we passed House Resolution 1231, a bill that recognizes the importance of Vietnam Veterans Day. In that legislation, we urged Americans to recognize the date and participate in local events. Across the Nation, several States have already organized Welcome Home events for Vietnam veterans on March 28 and March 29 of this year. This legislation before us would continue our support for this effort; provide honor and recognition of the contributions of veterans of the Armed Forces who served in Vietnam, and encourages the people of the United States to observe Welcome Home Viet-

nam Veterans Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 234.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. HALVORSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from California, the sponsor of this resolution, Ms. SÁNCHEZ.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 234, expressing support for Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day.

I want to thank Chairman BOB FILNER and Ranking Member STEVE BUYER for their strong commitment to all of America's veterans. Their leadership has been instrumental in bringing this important resolution to the floor today.

As a Nation, we honor those who defend us with statues, memorials, holidays, and praise. But as a people, we have not always fulfilled our duty to properly recognize those fellow citizens who put themselves in harm's way to keep us safe and protect our freedom, and no fellow citizens did we let down more than those who served bravely in Vietnam. They came home to a time of civil unrest and social turmoil, a time when opposition to the war too easily turned into opposition to those young men and women who served in it.

Unlike the GIs who served in previous conflicts, many Vietnam servicemembers came home not to a welcome back parade, but to hostility, ridicule, and bitter criticism. This cold reception, in addition to the brutal realities of serving in Vietnam, interfered with some veterans' efforts to transition back into their communities and establish a sense of normalcy. Just when they needed someone to lend an ear or a helping hand, too many found a cold shoulder.

By encouraging Americans to observe Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day, my resolution seeks to provide these heroes the welcome home that they always deserved but that too many never received.

Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day is the culmination of years of effort on the part of my constituent, Jose Ramos, himself a Vietnam veteran. As an Army combat medic in Vietnam, Jose Ramos was victim to the indifferent and often hostile public reaction upon returning home. It was his personal experiences and those of his fellow GIs that motivated him to work toward establishing a national day of recognition. His work inspired many, including me, to help give Vietnam veterans their long overdue welcome home.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mrs. HALVORSON. The gentlelady is granted an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. While today's resolution may seem like a small gesture when compared to what our soldiers and their families sacrificed, it certainly is, it

will serve to remind us of their service to our country.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join in honoring Vietnam veterans by participating in Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day events in their communities next year. Today, I ask for their vote.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. CAO).

Mr. CAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 234, to establish a Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. My family and I are direct beneficiaries of the sacrifice and service of the men and women who served this great Nation during the years of conflict in Vietnam.

I was born in Vietnam in 1967, during the most turbulent year of the war and while American troops were engaged in combat there. In 1975, my father, an army officer, was captured by the communist forces and sent to a re-education camp for nearly 7 years. I was 8 years old when I left my home country and came to America to make a new life with the tools of freedom and democracy that this great Nation stands for.

To the hundreds of thousands of veterans who returned from the Vietnam War, I say to you that your dedicated service to your country and mine is remembered by millions every day. I thank you for having fought for democracy and freedom even in the farthest reaches of the globe.

To each of the 58,256 servicemembers whose names appear on the solemn granite wall along the National Mall, I say to you that your ultimate sacrifice will never be forgotten. Your memories live on today through the millions of people throughout the world enjoying the opportunities, liberties, and freedom that you have fought so long and hard for.

Mr. Speaker, as we reflect today on the sacrifice and service of Vietnam veterans, I ask all Americans to consider our servicemembers engaged today around the globe. Currently, in Iraq and Afghanistan, we have nearly 200,000 service men and women serving this Nation honorably. During the course of these conflicts, 4,716 servicemembers have lost their lives and another 33,852 have been wounded fighting nobly to defeat terrorism and to bring freedom and democracy to oppressed people. We thank them and their families for their service, and they will never be forgotten.

As we chart the way forward in these conflicts, it is our obligation to ensure that the gains we and our coalition partners have made are not for naught, and that we continue on the fight to bring peace, democracy, and freedom to these nations that have been damaged and broken by brutal regimes.

Mr. Speaker, while I am struck by the fact that it is only today, some 34 years later, that we are establishing a day to welcome home from the Vietnam War some of America's bravest, I

am pleased that I, a direct beneficiary of their service, can take part in this historic event.

Mrs. HALVORSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. NYE).

Mr. NYE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the 543,000 troops who fought valiantly against communist forces in Vietnam. During that conflict, more than 58,000 brave Americans lost their lives, and over 300,000 were physically wounded. Yet, when our veterans returned home, our Nation too often failed to appreciate the sacrifices they had made on behalf of our freedom.

Thirty years earlier, we opened our arms to the soldiers returning from World War II, but for those coming home from Vietnam we failed to do the same. Instead of respecting their service, our Nation largely shunned these young servicemembers for doing the job that they had, in most cases, been drafted to perform. We did not comprehend nor did we respect the difficulties that many of them faced in transitioning back to civilian life after the horrors they had witnessed in combat.

The legacy of our failure to welcome our veterans home is still with us today. Every night, roughly 154,000 veterans are homeless, and 45 percent of these are from the Vietnam era. To allow those that fought for our safety to live on the streets is a black mark on the history of our Nation, and it is a warning to present and future generations of what must never happen again.

I believe the designation of March 30 as the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day is the least we can do to begin righting these wrongs. And as we do, let us also pledge to honor our commitment to the men and women who served in Vietnam, to give them the full care and benefits that they have earned, and to make sure that no veteran, past, present, or future, is ever forgotten again.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I certainly thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, how amazing, quite amazing that we just heard this testimony and these remarks from our colleague from Louisiana, Representative CAO. But if there is any reason for our colleagues to support this resolution, it is by the words that he just spoke. What an unbelievable story he told. He is a Vietnamese-American, his father for 7 years in a re-education camp in Vietnam, and here he is as a result of our men and women fighting for freedom and democracy and liberty. That is certainly a vivid demonstration of why we need to pass this resolution today. I certainly support Resolution 234, which will designate a Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day.

My district in McComb County, Michigan, is actually home to I think

one of if not the largest chapter of Vietnam veterans, Chapter 154, in the entire Nation.

My husband, a very proud Vietnam veteran, actually flew F-102s with the 509th Fighter-Interceptor group from air bases in both Danang and Saigon. These veterans served our Nation faithfully and with distinction and honor. But, to our everlasting shame, they received a horrible homecoming.

One of the saddest times, Mr. Speaker, in American history was the way that we treated our Vietnam veterans when they returned from combat. Caught in the crossfire of the debate on the war in our Nation, they came home to taunts, insults, and worse. These brave men and women, these great war fighters, these great patriots, these great Americans, they answered our Nation's call to fight, and they fought, they bled, and they died in the service of our country.

Not only did they have to bear their physical and psychological wounds of warfare, Mr. Speaker, but our Nation did not recognize them as the heroes that they were and that they are. There were no parades and no yellow ribbons and no thanks for serving when our Nation asked them to do so, and they stepped forward to defend freedom and liberty and democracy.

These men and women deserved better, Mr. Speaker. And although it has taken many years to rectify the injustice some of our fellow citizens visited upon our Vietnam veterans, today we can honor them, and we should, with a day to welcome them home properly. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial here in Washington is one of the most visited memorials. This wall stands as a reminder that 58,000 of our fellow countrymen paid the ultimate price, and we must never forget them.

We owe our Nation's veterans a debt that can never be fully repaid, but we want to thank them for their service and their sacrifice on behalf of our great Nation, and all of us will continue to work the halls of Congress to ensure that our veterans get the care, the help, the recognition, and the benefits that they so richly deserve. I know that I have a MIA/POW flag hanging right outside the door of my Congressional office, and if you walk up and down the halls of Congress, you will see many, many others displayed here as well.

□ 1430

We can never forget.

And I would encourage every community in America to observe the "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" so that we never forget our veterans' bravery, courage and sacrifice. And today let me say "welcome home."

I ask all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mrs. HALVORSON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Let me thank the gentlewoman for her leadership. And I appreciate my good friend and colleague, Congresswoman SANCHEZ, and the manager of this bill for your great leadership, as well, in handling this legislation that simply says a huge and overdue "thank you." And so I am pleased to stand on the floor of the House to support H. Res. 234 because I believe I was touched by this experience in this war, recognizing that as I would listen to Vietnam vets, those returning soldiers, speak in a language that we did not understand, talking about the places where they fought, speaking as if they were distant. Now I understand and hope we all understand as Americans that the war of a soldier is America's war. It is not a public-policy war. So we should stand with our soldiers who fight for our freedom no matter where they are.

I am honored today to be able to support this legislation because as a member of the Houston City Council, I joined with former council member Ben Reyes to raise the first POW/MIA flags in tribute to our fallen and missing soldiers in Vietnam. Those flags now stand today in front of the Houston City Hall. And I'm honored to have had the opportunity to be part of it.

Our soldiers deserve this welcome home. And more importantly, they deserve our understanding. So many of the Vietnam vets are homeless. And we should stand alongside of them. For many years, I participated in what we call "Stand Down" to bring our soldiers together.

I want to thank the Medal of Honor winners who always come to our Memorial Day service and sing their heart out and lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

I want to thank Vietnam vets like Antonio "Tony" Roman and John Footman, who today serve their country by being part of the Military Order of the Purple Heart working with our young soldiers.

Mr. Speaker, there is no honor—there is no honor that is too high for the soldiers who shed their blood, suffer and, of course, sacrifice on our behalf, those soldiers whose lives are lost, those soldiers who have come back to us, Vietnam vets deserve our honor. Today now we stand to welcome them home. Never will we turn our back. Always the light will be on. We welcome them home.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 234, "Expressing support for designation of a 'Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day.'" I want to thank my colleague Congresswoman LINDA SANCHEZ of California for introducing this resolution.

Few groups of Americans have sacrificed for our nation than those who have served in the Armed Forces. The war in Vietnam no longer makes headlines, but for many families it remains a daily reality, and I urge my colleagues to recognize the challenges that the families of these brave soldiers face and support this resolution in their honor.

Mr. Speaker, 2,637,100 people fought through the triumph and tragedy of the Viet-

nam War. Unfortunately, 58,000 never returned home again! If these now silent patriots have taught us anything, it is that because of these men and women who were willing to sacrifice their last blood and breath, the United States remains a symbol of freedom and a country whose ideas are still worth defending. As a result, these brave men and women memories should be preserved and honored for future generations in this great nation.

It was Edmund Burke who once aptly stated: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." The birth of our nation itself was due to good men who refused to submit to an unjust rule. Time after time, in battle after battle American men and women have not fled from mortal danger, no instead they have rushed towards it. Our brave soldiers built this nation, first with independence, then with the righteousness of eliminating slavery, and finally in the last century they built this nation in the eyes of the world, not only as a superpower, but as a nation that values humanity and kindness over the tyranny of others.

I see this same courage and strength in the eyes of our current generation of soldiers. They bear the burden of a new world, in which the greatest threats against our life and freedom are often unseen. They also bear the hope of a nation and a world that clings to the hope of peace and stability. It was the great statesman Adlai Stevenson who said: "Patriotism is not a short and frenzied outburst of emotion but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime." It is clear that the torch has been passed to a new generation of men and women willing to dedicate their lives to protecting ours. Our nation is truly blessed in so many ways, but our soldiers continue to be the greatest protectors of our blessings.

Because I feel so strong about our men and women fighting abroad and our veterans who served our nation, I will continue to advocate for their rights in Congress, and I urge my colleagues to fight as well.

Mr. Speaker, now is the time for the U.S. government to again fulfill our moral obligation to those who have fought for freedom and democracy. In the State of Texas we have 1,701,118 veterans, in fact in the 18th Congressional district of Texas alone there are more than 38,000 veterans and they make up almost ten percent of this district's civilian population over the age of 18. Yet we often forget about our men and women fighting abroad once the war is over. We must never forget veterans and we must never stop fighting for their rights as they fought for ours.

Vietnam Veterans like Antonio "Tony" Roman and John Footman, who continue to give back to their country and their fellow young military forces by working with the Military Order of the Purple Heart and by standing in the rain or the heat to be there when our Soldiers and Marines return from deployment. I meet with great men from Texas who are Vietnam Veterans, and our newer Gulf War, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom—and I see their continuing need for our support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 234, "Expressing support for designation of a 'Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day'."

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. HALVORSON. I would like to know if there are any further speakers.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I have no other speakers at this time.

Mrs. HALVORSON. Then we reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this resolution. It is long overdue. And I encourage Members to sponsor a "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" in their districts.

I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. HALVORSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Resolution 234.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 234, expressing support for designation of a "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day."

The very fact that we are deliberating about a "welcome home" for Vietnam veterans in 2009, decades after our participation in that conflict came to an end, says it all. Don't get me wrong. Those veterans eminently deserve that welcome, and the thanks for serving our Nation that comes with it. But it remains far too long overdue. Those veterans should have been welcomed home from day one. And yet, as the resolution says, "the Vietnam War was an extremely divisive issue among the people of the United States" and so "members of the United States Armed Forces who served bravely and faithfully for the United States during the Vietnam War were caught upon their return home in the crossfire of public debate about the involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War."

I want to thank those veterans not just for their service to our Nation in Vietnam, but for their service to our Nation upon their return, service that forms the backbone of support for veterans today. As we have confronted yet another divisive war these last few years, we have welcomed our returning servicemen and—women differently, honoring them appropriately and immediately. And that is largely because of those veterans of Vietnam.

As a 24-year veteran myself and as a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, I have seen a remarkable thing happen. Time and time again, I have heard Vietnam veterans—from witnesses at committee hearings and elsewhere—make clear that we cannot let one generation of veterans abandon another. We have to make sure this new generation of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans do not have to go through all the hardships we know all too well are awaiting them if we do not act to prevent them.

Whether it be access to VA health care, the specific mental health issues that some veterans face after the war, the problem of homelessness among

veterans, preventing our veterans from ending up incarcerated, or even the public perception of veterans and the way veterans think about and understand themselves as veterans—we know the dangers that are out there, thanks in no small part to Vietnam veterans working together, and we know we have to act aggressively to make sure we fulfill our commitment to our newest veterans.

For my part, I see no more important task as a member of Congress and of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

But I also have to say, I think something else has started to happen as we as a country have worked to honor and do justice to the veterans of our current conflicts—regardless of how we feel individually about the war itself. I think just as Vietnam veterans have done for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans what World War I veterans did for World War II veterans, supporting the next generation of veterans, I think our society's treatment of our newest veterans has begun a really renewed appreciation for and a different, more positive public perception of Vietnam veterans themselves.

What you all went through when you came home is something that never should be repeated. And it should not have happened in the first place. But it says something about you as a group and America as a society that we have finally, I think, started to move away from the ugliness of that time, and from the stereotypes and clichés about Vietnam veterans.

The new congressional majority that I was a part of forming in 2006 committed to making our military and our veterans an absolutely top priority. And we did that last Congress, and we continue to do that in this new Congress. Last Congress, we passed the largest veterans funding increase in history, increasing pay for our military and providing them with more of the protection they need when they go into battle, passing into law a historic new GI Bill that should do for our 21st century veterans what the original GI Bill did after World War II.

And we will continue that work in this Congress, putting America's veterans first and working to provide them with the care and benefits they deserve.

The debt we owe those who serve our country honorably in the military is never fully paid. But we owe that obligation to our veterans, and it begins with a full welcome home. The Nation can never fully repair the damage done with the failure to immediately and fully welcome home our veterans from Vietnam. But it is never too late to continue recognizing the obligation we owe you, and thanking you for what you have done and what you continue to do.

Mr. MCMAHON. Mr. Speaker I rise in support of House Resolution 234.

Designating March 30th as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" is long overdue.

This day is not only in remembrance of the over 58,000 members of the Armed Services that lost their lives in Vietnam, but serves as a lesson in conduct and appropriate public debate in regards to our veterans.

March 30th, 1973, has taught us lessons that unfortunately will soon be very relevant to the present day.

No matter the various views of the war in Iraq, I am confident that our servicemen and

women will return home to an atmosphere of appreciation and reception.

Unfortunately, the 543,000 troops that returned from Vietnam did not all receive the same respect, but their legacy has ensured a brighter future and degree of tolerance exercised towards the next generation of armed servicemembers.

Mrs. HALVORSON. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to unanimously support House Resolution 234.

I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. HALVORSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 234.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF TAIWAN RELATIONS ACT

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 55) recognizing the 30th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 55

Whereas April 10, 2009, will mark the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the Taiwan Relations Act (Public Law 96-8), codifying in law the basis for continued commercial, cultural, and other relations between the United States and the Republic of China (Taiwan);

Whereas the Taiwan Relations Act has been instrumental in maintaining peace, security, and stability in the Taiwan Strait since its enactment in 1979;

Whereas when the Taiwan Relations Act was enacted, it affirmed that the United States' decision to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China was based on the expectation that the future of Taiwan would be determined by peaceful means;

Whereas the Taiwan Relations Act declares that peace and stability in the area are in the political, security, and economic interests of the United States, and are matters of international concern;

Whereas the Taiwan Relations Act states that it is the policy of the United States to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character to maintain the capacity to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan;

Whereas the Taiwan Relations Act also states that "it is the policy of the United States to preserve and promote extensive, close, and friendly commercial, cultural and other relations between the people on Taiwan, as well as the people on the China mainland";

Whereas the relationship between the United States and Taiwan has strengthened with—

(1) Taiwan's evolution into a free society and a full-fledged, multi-party democracy;

(2) the development of Taiwan's robust free-market economy;

(3) Taiwan's determined effort and collaboration with the United States to combat global terrorism, as demonstrated in part by its participation in the Container Security Initiative and its generous contribution to the Pentagon Memorial Fund; and

(4) the leadership role Taiwan has demonstrated in addressing transnational and global challenges, including its active engagement in humanitarian relief measures, public health endeavors, environmental protection initiatives, and financial market stabilization efforts; and

Whereas Taiwan's democracy has deepened with the second peaceful transfer of power from one political party to another after the presidential election in March 2008: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the Taiwan Relations Act as the cornerstone of relations between the United States and Taiwan;

(2) reaffirms its support for Taiwan's democratic institutions; and

(3) supports the strong and deepening relationship between the United States and Taiwan.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROSELEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution and yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution recognizes the enactment of the Taiwan Relations Act 30 years ago and reaffirms congressional support for that law. I would like to thank my good friend, Representative SHELLEY BERKLEY of Nevada, for her leadership both as co-chair of the Taiwan Caucus and as the chief sponsor of this resolution.

The Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 forms the official basis for friendship and cooperation between the United States and Taiwan. It has been instrumental in maintaining peace and security across the Taiwan Straits and in East Asia. Since the lifting of martial law in 1987, Taiwan has evolved into a robust and lively democracy. The U.S.-Taiwan relationship, once based solely on shared interests, is now based on shared values.

This remarkable political evolution proves beyond any doubt that the notion of "Asian values," often used to justify one-man or one-party rule, is a fallacy. Taiwan's democratic ideals have become even more engrained in its national identity following its second peaceful transfer of power in last year's presidential election.